Northern Messenger

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXIX., No. 23. MONTREAL & NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 9, 1894. 30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

HESBA STRETTON AT HOME.

It was a glorious summer's day, and I called on a friend at Putney, in the afternoon, in order to induce her to go for a walk. The French window of her room was wide open, and outside it, set prettily off against the shrubbery, a small party was assembled for tea. Three ladies formed the party; one was my friend, the hostess, and with her were two other ladies.

'I was just wishing that you might come,' my friend greeted me, and then, instead of embarking on the orthodox ceremony of introducing, she added, with a smile, and looking at one of the two ladies, 'Do you know who this is?' evidently pre-supposing that I did know. But I did not, and could only say, apologetically, and inwardly disgusted with my great talent for not remembering people, 'I know the face quite well, but I cannot place it at the moment.' This was no mere and meaningless form of speech; I had often seen pictures of the grave, sweet face, the large grey eyes, the silvering curls, and the picturesque, foreign-looking cap.

'It is Miss Hesba Stretton,' I was then told, 'and this is her sister, Miss Stretton.' And thereupon we settled down to a little partie carree, and to a big, long chat.

I have no recollection of any special subject of conversation that afternoon, but what I do recollect very vividly is that, though I tried once or twice to give a twist to our talk which might bring us to the interesting subject of her authorship, Miss Stretton would much rather talk of other things. Also, I went away with the distinct impression that I had made the acquaintance of two women, whose lives were so sweet, so honest, so useful, one must needs be the better for knowing them. Hence I was truly glad when they invited me to come with our mutual Putney friend and see them at their home on Ham Common.

HESBA STRETTON.

One autumn afternoon we went to Ivycroft, where Miss Elizabeth and Miss Hesba Stretton have made their home.

My friends have often laughed at me when I stated my conviction that some houses had souls, and some had not. But I maintain that this is true, and Ivycroft, on Ham Common, has a soul. The house is two hundred years old, not very large, but picturesque, to my mind, with the picturesqueness of the period just before the days of Queen Anne. You enter it by an ivy-covered gate, and if you are fortunate, then that gate, and the path to the door, and the steps, and the entrance, appear to your mind's eye always with an attractive figure of an elderly lady smiling a welcome to you; with yet another lady, of a pale, strong, honest face, not far off; and of a jolly Irish terrier, Sandy by name, keeping well in the rear, but never out of sight.

The interior of the house is very pretty. There is nothing luxurious, but neither is there anything tawdry or in bad taste. Somehow you feel that things are just what and where they ought to be. The pictures on the walls reveal the fact that the artistic as well as the literary taste of the family is far above the average. And, as you look at some of the animal pictures about the house, you remember that Mr. Philip Stretton, the nephew, is one among the foremost of the younger generation of animal painters, and that you have seen his canvases again and again on the walls of the Academy.

Richmond and Ham Common were glorious with April sun and air when I went again to Ivycroft. For a while we chatted on, as people chat who meet again after a period during which each has followed his or her own work and play. Then the talk turned on Miss Stretton's latest and as yet unpublished work, produced in collaboration with 'Stepniak,' the Russian exile. It is, I believe, a story of religious persecution in Russia, and will, no doubt, be deeply interesting whenever it appears. And so on till tea-time. The afternoon was drawing to an end; I must get my information now or never. Yet I saw very clearly by this time that Miss Hesba Stretton does not care to talk about her work, and that it would plainly give her pain if I returned to the subject. But Miss Elizabeth Stretton, the strong, clear-headed elder sister, to whom her sister's praise is dearer than her own, might perhaps help me. I lured her away from the drawing-room into a cosy corner at the other side of the house, and petitioned, 'Now tell me something about your sister's work. How did she first begin to write?'

It is a good story that of this graceful and popular writer's life-work. Her real name, I should perhaps explain, is not Stretton, but Smith, and the name Hesba is prettily composed of the initials of the five sisters, of whom 'Hesba' was the third. The girls lost their mother while they were yet quite young; their father was a bookseller and a bookworm, kind to his children, but quite absorbed in his beloved books. The mother's pedigree, by the way, has quite lately been discovered to go back to 1158, when the founder of the family was Chancellor to Henry II., and was made rector of Bakewell by him. It is said that through six hundred years, through nineteen generations, the Bakewell family has been distinguished by brain-power above the average.

Mr. Smith and his daughters lived at Wellington, near Shrewsbury, and very very quietly did the girls' days and years go on. An uncle had left the younger sister a house at Stretton, and 'Hesba' was staying there on a visit when her elder sister Elizabeth came one day and told an amusing story which someone had told their father in her hearing. 'Hesba' listened in silence, and later on, worked the incident out into a little story. Not, however, with any idea about publishing it, but simply for her own and her sisters' amusement. But Elizabeth, the elder sister, thinking that the story had some literary merit, sent it, without the writer's knowledge, to Charles Dickens, and very soon afterwards a wonderful letter came, containing a cheque for £5, and a request for more stories of the same kind. Can't you imagine the joy and delight of that cheque, quite apart from its monetary value? I think I feel the thrill that must have flashed through her as the

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A FALL DOWN THE PRECIPICE.

Some years ago a Russian nobleman was going to cross from Switzerland into Italy by the path of St. Theodule. The path lies over a large glacier, which is reckoned one of the least dangerous in Switzerland, but still is intersected by enormous fissures or crevasses in the ice, extending to a great depth. These crevasses are often lightly frozen over and covered with a coating of snow, so that the danger is unseen. It is therefore the custom for travellers who go this way to be roped together, leaving a considerable distance between each, so that if one should fall, the others to whom he is attached are able to draw him up again without danger to themselves.

This Russian nobleman, however, secure in his knowledge of the mountains and their perils, disdained the assistance of the rope, and with one guide prepared to cross the pass.

All went well for some time, and the traveller began to boast of his powers, and of his being able to do without the precautions taken by others.

All of a sudden the guide, who was in front, heard a crash and a cry, and looking back in alarm, the Russian was nowhere to be seen; only a hole where the treacherous ice had broken, and through which he had fallen to a considerable depth. Much to his joy, the guide heard a voice coming from the bottom of the chasm and assuring him that the traveller was alive, and that no bones were broken.

Instantly the guide starts for Zermatt, to bring ropes and help to get him out. With all the speed he is capable of, he hurries on, and collects a body of willing helpers, with ropes and lights and every needful appliance. How long his absence must have seemed to that poor man! How he would have strained his ears for every sound, and again and again believed his deliverers were at hand!

He gets weary of hoping, and the intense cold of the ice in which he is wedged has begun to cause stupor; his senses and his strength are both leaving him. But he is roused by a shout, and with difficulty summoning his energies he sees the faces of his deliverers, and watches the letting down of the rope that is to free him.

Meanwhile the rescue party were doing all that could be done with all possible speed. Strong men were ready to pull up the rope the moment the signal should be given; one rope was added after another, but no strain was felt. At last all the ropes were used, everything that could be employed was given for the purpose, but still no sign.

At last, with blank and terrified faces, they were compelled to acknowledge the fearful truth, that their rope, though very nearly long enough, would not quite reach the sufferer; he saw it, but it was beyond his grasp; it might as well never have been there. One can picture the frantic efforts of the rescuers—how they tried everything just to make it a little longer, but in vain—nothing would do; so in the darkening gloom they had to return to Zermatt with sad and downcast hearts, knowing that night was coming on, and that their poor fellow-creature must die.

A yard or two of rope made all the difference between life and death.

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'Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;' but we never read of the barrier of the 'almost' being passed. And in the great hereafter it is only too sadly certain that amongst the lost there will be very many who were 'almost saved.'

God seeth not as man seeth. He only recognizes two divisions of men—the saved and the not saved. The rope in the story was not long enough to reach the sufferer; but Christ's salvation is deep enough to reach to the lowest, broad enough to embrace the most distant. Not one can say it did not reach him as long as those words remain: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

But the personal acceptance of Christ is our own matter. Though His salvation 'is near,' yet if it is only 'near,' and not in us, we are only 'almost saved;' and we have seen what that means. We can know, and teach, and preach about Christ without ever having Christ; we may very nearly believe in Him, but not quite; we may intend to yield our hearts to Him, but keep putting it off; we may only just not accept Him, and, near as we may be to life, we shall be far enough to be without it.

'Almost'—but lost!—'Friendly Greetings.'

HIS WAY.

A pastor who had been very successful in establishing churches near his own, was asked in Presbytery how he did it; and answered: 'In my garden I go to a thrifty currant bush and bend down some of the outer branches and put a shovelful of dirt over them toward the ends; and when they have taken root, I cut the connection between the new and the old. So, I establish a prayer meeting,—or send some of my members to conduct a Sabbath-school—in a community otherwise unprovided for. Then I preach there perhaps once a month; and after a while I take the session out, and have a communion service, and there receive members into the home church; and later on I set them off into a church of their own. Meanwhile, I have been doing the same in some other community; and, as these stations grow into churches, I get some minister to come and take one or more of them, with aid, financial and otherwise from the mother church, and from the Home Board if necessary, and at last cut them loose from the home church and give our time and energies and money to like work in other places.'—Dr. Seward.

DO NOT NEGLECT IT.

A certain minister called upon a member who had been neglecting the week-night services, and went straight up to the fireplace in the sitting-room, and with the tongs removed a live coal from off the fire and placed it on the hearth, then watched it while it turned from the red glow of heat to a black mass. The member in question carefully observed the proceeding, and then said: 'You need not say a single word, sir; I'll be there on Wednesday night.'

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VII, NOVEMBER 18, 1894.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—Luke 6: 20-31.

Commit to memory vs. 27-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise.'—Luke 6: 31.

THE LESSON STORY.

After Jesus chose the twelve apostles he stood in an open place with them, and a great multitude of people came to him. Some were sick and some had evil spirits, and Jesus healed them all. Then he went away with the twelve disciples to a mountain and taught them there.

He told them who the happy ones on this earth are. He called them 'blessed.' Jesus called the poor blessed. He meant those who are humble in spirit and trust God to make them good. He called those blessed who hunger and thirst to know what will please God. He said that these would be 'filled' or satisfied, for God will teach them how to please him.

Jesus taught the disciples how to behave to other people. He said that they must love their enemies. If wicked people harm Christ's disciples these must never harm back again, but pray for their enemies and try to do them good. And then he taught them the beautiful Golden Rule. Just the way we would like others to do us, just so we should do to them.

Jesus taught many other lessons to his disciples that day in this wonderful 'Sermon on the Mount.'—Berean Lesson Book.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 6: 20-31.—The Sermon on the Mount.
T. Matt. 5: 1-26.—True Disciples.
W. Matt. 5: 27-48.—The Tongue and the Temper.
Th. Matt. 6: 1-18.—Giving and Praying.
F. Matt. 6: 19-34.—Our Father's Care.
S. Matt. 7: 1-14.—Golden Precepts.
S. Matt. 7: 15-29 Solemn Warnings.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Blesseds of the Kingdom, vs. 20-23.
II. The Woes of the Kingdom, vs. 24-26.
III. The Law of Love. vs. 27-31.

Time.—A. D. 28, summer; Tiberius Caesar emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.

Place.—The Mount of Beatitudes, or the Horns of Hattin, seven miles south-west of Capernaum.

OPENING WORDS.

Immediately after our Lord had chosen his twelve apostles, he delivered his discourse which is called 'The Sermon on the Mount,' of which our lesson to-day is a part. (See Matt. 5-7.)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

20. Blessed be the poor—poor in spirit, who have humble views of yourselves as sinners. Yours—intended and prepared for you. The kingdom of God—which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 21. That hunger now—intensely desire and earnestly seek. Shall be filled—shall receive your desire. That weep now—on account of sin. Shall laugh—shall rejoice in the assurance of pardon. 22. For the Son of Man's sake—because you are his disciples. 24, 25. Rich.....full.....laugh—who have all your good things and joyous feelings here and now, in perishable objects. Shall hunger....mourn and weep—your inward cravings strong as ever, but the materials of satisfaction for ever gone. 29. Smiteth thee—our Lord's example (John 18: 22, 23) is the best comment on these words. Cloak—the outer garment or mantle. Coat—the inner garment or tunic. 30. Give to every man—refuse no man in a spirit of retaliation. 31. As ye would—compare Matt. 7: 12. This is called 'The Golden Rule.'

QUESTIONS.

Introductory.—What was the subject of the last lesson? Name the twelve apostles. What power did Jesus give them? Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses? Catechism?

I. The Blesseds of the Kingdom. vs. 20-23.—What blessing did Jesus pronounce in verse 20? Who are meant by the poor? What is promised to them? Who are pronounced blessed in verse 21? What are they promised? Who are declared blessed in verse 22? Why are they told to rejoice?

II. The woes of the Kingdom. vs. 24-26.—What woe is pronounced in verse 24? In verse 25? In verse 26? Describe the classes here named? What reasons are given for the woes pronounced upon them?

III. The Law of Love vs. 27-31.—How are we to feel and act towards our enemies? What are we to do when wronged or injured? How did our Saviour show this spirit? What rule is here given for common life? What is this rule called? What is the sum of the ten commandments?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. We should have humble views of ourselves.
2. If we earnestly strive for holiness of heart and life, we should be satisfied.
3. We should be willing to bear reproach for the sake of Christ.
4. We should love our enemies and seek their good.
5. We must forgive others if we would have God forgive us.
6. We must do to others as we would have them do to us.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Whom did our Lord first pronounce blessed? Ans.—Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.
2. Who are further declared blessed? Ans.—Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.
3. Whom else did he pronounce blessed? Ans.—Those who are hated and reproached and persecuted for the Son of Man's sake.
4. How does our Lord counsel us to act toward our enemies? Ans.—Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.
5. What are we to do when reviled and persecuted? Ans.—Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.
6. What is our Saviour's Golden Rule? Ans.—As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

LESSON VIII, NOVEMBER 25, 1894.

OPPOSITION TO CHRIST.—Mark 3: 22-35.

Commit to memory vs. 23-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'He came unto his own and his own received him not.'—John 1: 11.

THE LESSON STORY.

So many people followed Jesus now that the scribes and Pharisees were more angry than ever. They could not deny that he did wonderful works; so they said that he did these miracles by the power of Satan.

Jesus knew their evil thoughts even before they spoke them, and he said to the people who listened, 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' Jesus had cast evil spirits out of many, and they had become kind, and gentle, and good, where before they were full of hate and evil works. How foolish and wicked to say that Satan's power would cast out his own evil power!

Then Jesus spoke the most solemn words that are in all the Bible. They are about that awful sin which can never be forgiven. However wicked people may become, if they are deeply sorry in their hearts, and ask God, he will, for Jesus's sake, forgive them. But it is possible to so hate God and goodness as to not even want to be forgiven.

The mother of Jesus, and his brothers, came looking for him, and some of the crowd told Jesus. Then he looked on his disciples and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren!' Any one who will obey God is as dear to Jesus as his brother, or sister, or mother!—'Berean Lesson Book.'

LESSON PLAN

I. The Scribes' Wicked Charge. vs. 22-27.
II. The Unpardonable Sin. vs. 28-30.
III. The true friends of Christ. vs. 31-35.

HOME READINGS.

M. Matt. 8: 5-13.—The Centurion's Servant healed.
T. Luke 7: 11-17.—The Widow's Son Raised.
W. Luke 7: 36-50.—Dining with a Pharisee.
Th. Matt. 12: 22-45.—A Blind and Dumb Demoniac Healed.
F. Mark 3: 22-35.—Opposition to Christ.
S. John 15: 18-27.—Hatred without Cause.
S. John 14: 15-27.—Obedience the Proof of Love.

Time.—A. D. 28, autumn; Tiberius Caesar emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.

Place.—Capernaum.

OPENING WORDS.

After the Sermon on the Mount our Lord returned to Capernaum, where he healed the centurion's servant. Mat. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10. Great crowds continued to follow him. He then made a tour through Galilee, during which he restored to life the son of the widow of Nain. Matt. 11: 1-19; Luke 7: 11-8: 3. On his return to Capernaum he healed one possessed with a devil. Mat. 12: 22. This miracle occasioned the charge of the scribes to which our Lord replies in this lesson. Parallel passages, Matt. 12: 24-32, 46-50; Luke 11: 15-22; 12: 10; 8: 19-21.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

From Jerusalem—they were spies sent to watch him. He hath Beelzebub—they could not deny his miracles, and so they charged him with working them by the aid of the prince of devils. 23. How can Satan—if he has helped me to heal these persons, he has helped me to undo his own work. 27. No man can enter—the casting out of demons, instead of showing that Jesus and Satan were in league together, proved that Satan had met his conqueror. 29. Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost—ascribe to the devil what is clearly the work of the Holy Spirit, as the scribes had done. Hath never forgiveness—shall suffer eternal punishment. 1 John 5: 16. 30. Because they said—because they charged him with acting under the influence of an unclean spirit, Beelzebub, instead of the Holy Ghost. 31. His brethren—probably the younger children of Joseph and Mary. 34, 35. His true disciples, those who do, as well as hear, the will of God, are his nearest kindred. 'He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb. 2: 11.

QUESTIONS.

Introductory. — What was the subject of the last lesson? Give in order the leading events between this lesson and the last. Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory Verses?

I. The Scribes' Wicked Charge. vs. 22-27.—What wicked charge did the scribes bring against Jesus? Who is meant by Beelzebub? How did Jesus answer the scribes? How did this show the absurdity of their charge? Explain and apply verse 27.

II. The Unpardonable Sin. vs. 28-30.—What did Jesus next say? What is blasphemy? What sin is here said to be unpardonable? Meaning of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Why did Jesus make this declaration?

III. The True Friends of Christ. vs. 31-35.—Who came to Jesus? Why did they not come in where Jesus was? (See Luke 8: 19.) What was Jesus told? What was his reply? Who did he say was his nearest kindred? What did Jesus give as a test of friendship for him? John 15:14.

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. It is a most fearful sin to ascribe to Satan what comes from the Holy Ghost.
2. We are either the friends or the foes of Jesus—with him or against him.
3. They who do as well as hear the will of God are his friends.
4. Every true Christian is taken into the very family of God, and is dear to Christ as his own mother.
5. We should love Jesus with all our hearts, and never be ashamed to own our love for him.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. What charge did the scribes bring against Jesus? Ans.—He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.
2. How did Jesus answer the charge? Ans. How can Satan cast out Satan? If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.
3. What is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Ans. Ascribing the work of the Holy Ghost to the devil.
4. What did Jesus say of this sin? Ans. It hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.
5. Who did he say were his nearest kindred? Ans. Whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

SHALL BABY MIND ?

When shall I begin to discipline my child ? is a question which every mother ought to ask. If I say it is hardly possible to begin too early, many will be surprised, if not incredulous.

'I never punished a child before it was two years old,' said a dear old lady to me when my first baby lay in my arms.

'I don't intend to punish at all,' I replied ; for, like most inexperienced persons, I had fine theories in regard to bringing up children.

'I hope you won't need to ; but "In Adam's fall we sinned all," you know,' she said with a hearty laugh ; thinking no doubt that a few years would teach me many things.

While my baby was 'in arms,' my theories were delightful ; but with creeping, trouble began. The things that he ought not to touch were the only attractive ones, and most fascinating of all was the bookcase. Nothing delighted him more than to tug away till the books tumbled out on the floor. Persuasion and argument were of no avail. 'No, no,' and 'Baby naughty,' were greeted with bright smiles or utter indifference. I began to fear that the child knew he was not doing right, and that this knowledge added an element of mischievous pleasure. But what was to be done ? I taxed my ingenuity, but I could not keep my child away from the books. Must I give up to a baby of a few months ? I asked myself, ashamed that my theories had failed in the crucial test.

Suddenly, common-sense came to the rescue. A dozen times had I carried the little witch away from the scene of conflict, only to see him creep back with all speed at the first opportunity. Then, deliberately I threw my theories to the winds, and gave the dear chubby little hand a smart slap. Such a look of surprise and distress ! It nearly broke my heart. Then a change came over the face, and with a defiant look that said 'I will,' again he attacked the books. Again I slapped the hand ; then I took the sobbing baby on my knee, talked with and quieted him. When I put him down this time the books were safe ; he would not touch them.

The victory is won, I thought with a sigh, for I was tired out with excitement. It was a relief to conquer, but the method was a trial. Then I remembered that our Heavenly Father taught obedience in ways quite as hard to us as this had been to my child, and I was comforted.

Whenever after that my baby crept to the books, a decided 'No,' or at most 'Mamma punish,' was sufficient to keep him out of mischief.

The battle had to be fought again in regard to other things—the poker and tongs, the album, the piano ; but in the course of six weeks I felt safe to take my baby anywhere. In the midst of costly bric-a-brac I had no fear, for my child had learned the grand lesson of obedience.

'How do you manage ?' a friend asked me as we were preparing to leave her house after a two days' visit. 'Much as I wanted to see you, I will confess that I hesitated when I thought of the child. My cousin's little boy was here a week, and I couldn't tell you how many things he ruined !'

'Has your cousin ever punished her child ?' I asked.

'O no ! Why, he isn't three years old yet.' I smiled and did not wonder at her troubles.

There may be some mothers who can spare the rod without spoiling the child ; there may be some children more easily influenced than mine ; but for the majority, I do believe some punishment is necessary, and the earlier a mother begins, the less of it she will have to do. 'Wait until the child can understand,' I was told over and over again. Ah ! but who can tell how early a child may understand the difference between right and wrong ? Experience has taught me that if a baby learns to mind before he learns to walk, by the time he is two years old he will have settled into a habit of minding, when punishment will rarely be necessary.

In these days of ungoverned children—dreaded by host and hotel-keeper alike—every mother should insist on obedience at whatever cost to her own feelings. Make no unnecessary prohibitions. Make every effort to prevent disobedience. Divert the attention. Be sometimes deaf and blind to little unintentional misdemeanors. Punish sparingly ; but when it is really necessary, never neglect it. How can we expect our children to obey the commands of God if we do not teach them obedience ? —'The Household.'

CONVERT THE PARLOR.

Many farmers' wives need to learn how to use their houses. An hour's drive through any farming community will convince the most skeptical of the truth of this statement. We pass in this drive house after house with tightly closed doors and windows. Very often there is no sign of life about the place until the barn is reached, and then we see by the presence of animals and farming implements that some one is living on the premises. If you ask the housewife the reason for this locking and barring, she will tell you at first that her mother always did the same. If you persist, she will also state that closed blinds keep out flies and dust, and prevent the sun from spoiling the furniture. So during the hot weather the family eat in the main kitchen, the cooking being done in a summer kitchen or shed, and too often in the room in which the meals are served. The children, when not out of the house, must stay in this hot, poorly-ventilated room. The farmer and the housewife are so tired with their hard day's work that they are *glad* to go to bed almost at dusk. What then becomes of the boys ? Why, they get into the habit of spending their evenings at the country store—and very unsafe places are many of these country stores. If the farmer's wife will take time to think, she will realize that in the community in which she lives, there are one or two men, perhaps, that are moral plague spots on the good name of the community. She will also discover that the country store is the headquarters of these men. For this reason, if for no other, she will try and keep her boys away from that store in the evenings. If she can only bring herself to convert—and I use the word almost in its Scriptural sense — her closed-up parlor into a genuine living-room, where the boys and girls can entertain their friends, she will be doing much to secure the future happiness of her home. Some women, when too late, have realized that carpets and chairs are not so valuable a family possession as character and moral purity. The expense of such an arrangement, aside from the wear and tear upon the household plenishings, is trifling. In almost every farmhouse parlor there is a lamp, seldom, if ever, used. Oil for that lamp and a heating apparatus of some sort are all that will be required to make of that parlor an attractive place.—Helen Jay, in 'Ladies' Home Journal.'

HINTS ON HOUSE-BUILDING.

(By Dola Fay.)

The first consideration in building a house is comfort. Every farmer's wife needs and appreciates a large, commodious cellar. Unless the house is very large, it is poor economy not to have the cellar under the whole house. Divide the cellar off into two apartments, one for vegetables and one for milk, butter, canned fruit, etc. A cellar bottom should be cemented with cement concrete to the depth of two or three inches. A firm, solid cement for flooring a cellar can be made by the following recipe : Take any receptacle and fill loosely with sand, measure the water and pour on the sand till the receptacle is full. Mix with the wet sand as much Portland cement as it took of water to wet the sand ; then add water enough to work nicely. This will make a good solid floor.

Have an outside cellar door to prevent dirt from being tracked through the house while vegetables, fruit and other things are being carried through to an interior cellar way. Unless it is perfectly convenient, do not make the cellar stairs under the chamber stairs. Better make a closet under the chamber stairs and let the cellar stairs go down from the pantry or some place in the kitchen where they will be convenient to use regularly. A stairway having a landing is preferable to a long flight of stairs, unbroken by a landing, as the danger of falling is lessened.

By all means have a pantry, and have it as large as you conveniently can. Let it contain all the conveniences you can. If the kitchen serves also as a dining room, it may be more easily kept presentable if a large pantry is at hand. Very much depends upon the location of sink, cupboards, etc., so as to make the least work for the housewife.

In planning a house, closets are too often left out. Have plenty of closet room. In planning a closet have it wide enough for a trunk at one end. In the same end, put a broad shelf at a convenient height, for surplus bedding. One corner of a room may be cut off for a space of 3½ feet on each side. This can be treated as a solid wall with a doorway cut in. This arrangement will not detract from the appearance of the room.

Nothing but well-seasoned wood should be used for flooring, especially in rooms which are not to be carpeted. In selecting flooring, no matter what the wood is, choose fine grain ; avoid wavy grain. Knotty places are apt to scale off.

A pleasant appendage to the farm house is a shady back porch, where the tired housekeeper may sit and rest on a warm day.—'Agriculturist.'

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

(A chat by Lucy Elliot Keeler.)

'Some years ago the daughter of the American Minister to Germany asked an experienced woman for advice in her social career. The first requisite, she was told, was to learn the German language, of which she knew nothing. To get it she must lay aside her books, conquer her habit of reticence, and talk. "Make people talk to you ; talk to them ; everybody—servants, shopkeepers, authors, princes. Never mind mistakes ; nobody will laugh at the minister's daughter, but talk !" In six months she was the marvel of the place, having learned to speak the language with richness and purity.'

'One learns to talk only by talking. Practice is the best of professional educators. Chesterfield, when a boy, resolved not to utter one word, even in common conversation, which should not be the most expressive and the most elegant with which the language could supply him for the purpose ; and Dr. Johnson's rule was always to talk as well as you can, no matter what the company, and by so doing, that which was an effort at first will become easy. No art, unless it be the art of thought, can be so constantly practised as conversation ; its very facility may be its way, for, excepting again right thinking, good conversation is perhaps the rarest of accomplishments.'

'The weather is too marvellous to be despised, and Mr. Ellwanger is right in calling it the oil of conversation's wheels. It is capable, too, of more than the commonplace exclamations. One of the pleasant recollections of my life is a conversation beginning with, 'The sky to-night was a battlefield for the armies of glory and gloom." I was a timid girl, but I was surprised into a response which led to a lively talk and a lasting friendship. The subject really matters little. The main thing is to begin at once, and to leave a gate open behind you. People who benumb their companions with monosyllables, and the utter dropping of the conversation ball as it is tossed, are as rude as the person who shuts a door in another's face. Periods are out of place in conversation, where the dash and the interrogation mark should rule supreme."'

'But the dash implies interruption. Is it not as rude to open a person's door uninvited as to close your own door in his face ?'

'Interruption should come from one's self. A person should never talk so long as to require interruption. "Take as many half-minutes as you can get," advised Sidney Smith, "but never talk more than half-a-minute without pausing and giving others a chance to strike in !" '—'The Outlook.'

HOURS OF SLEEP.

One of the great mistakes of parents and those who have charge of children, is that they are likely to allow the little ones too little time to sleep. With one excuse and another the youngsters are up later at night than they should be, and as they must be off at school betimes in the morning, and there may be duties to perform, they are called long before they have finished their morning nap.

Children, as a rule, ought to sleep ten or eleven hours, and to do this they must be put to bed early enough at night so that they may get this amount of uninterrupted rest. But it is a difficult thing to give the children the amount of sleep they require, because there is almost always something going on in the evening that interests them—some one comes in, there is a new paper or book, or something is being talked of that they like to hear. They plead and entreat to stay up just a little longer, and with a spirit of indulgence the parents yield. Of course, this means but one thing, too little repose and a curtailing of the hours of rest that nature imperatively demands.

It is no wonder that children are nervous, fretful and difficult to get along with. Their nerves, inherited from dyspeptic parents, are keenly alive to every sound, and their tempers, none the best, or they would not be the children of their parents, are irritated by being called out of bed when they so much want to sleep. During the earlier years of childhood, whatever else may be done, there should be ample provision for long and undisturbed sleep. It means health and strength in later years, clear heads, good dispositions and well-regulated mentality.—'N. Y. Ledger.'

OMELETS.

A breakfast dish that relishes oftener than almost any other is an omelet, and there are 'ways and ways' of making omelets. Every housewife knows the original method, but a slight digression will be found palatable as well as economical. Soak a cup of bread-crumbs in a cup of sweet milk over night. In the morning add three well-beaten eggs and a pinch of salt. Have a well-greased skillet, moderately hot, into which pour the mixture. Cook slowly until a golden brown ; this may be determined by raising the edges with a knife. Brown in a hot oven and serve immediately. Another omelet is made by using a cup of mashed potatoes, three eggs and a half-cup of milk. Fry as before. Cold meat, chopped fine, and added to an omelet when ready to brown or fold, is a pleasing dish, besides utilizing scraps that might otherwise be wasted.—'Housekeeper.'

SELECTED RECIPES.

Fried Apples.—Pare sound apples, slice them half-an-inch thick, remove the cores without breaking the slices, fry them in hot butter until tender, lay them in little piles with sugar and spice dusted over them, and serve them on slices of toast.

Oatmeal Mush Rolls.—Take cold oatmeal mush, and work lightly into it enough Graham flour to mould it into rolls. Do not overwork it, as too much kneading spoils the effect. Roll out the dough with the hands on the moulding-board into a long roll, about an inch-and-a-half in diameter ; cut off pieces three inches long, and bake on the grate in a quick oven half-an-hour. Serve warm or cold.

Hominy Fritters.—Two tea-cups of cold boiled hominy ; stir in one tea-cupful of sweet milk, and a little salt, four tablespoonfuls of sifted flour and a little butter, one egg to be added last. Fry a dark brown in hot lard.

Apple Sauce.—After paring your apples, slice them in your stew-pan with a little water, let them cook until soft, covering well to keep in the steam. Remove them from the stove, add brown sugar and cinnamon, stir them just a little.

Auntie's Ginger Snaps.—One cup of molasses, one-half cup of butter, one teaspoonful of soda, one tablespoonful of ginger, flour to form a stiff dough, roll as thin as possible, and bake in a quick oven.

HER MAJESTY.

(By Edgar Wade Abbot.)

Her Majesty comes when the sun goes down
And clambers up to her throne, my knee;
Her royal robe is a small white gown,
And this is Her Majesty's stern decree:
'Let me know when the Sandman passes by,
For we're going to speak to him, you and I.'

'There was once a monarch of old,' I say,
'Who sat where the beach and the breakers met:
'Roll back!' he said to the waves one day,
'For the royal feet must not be wet!'
But the waves rolled on. For things there be,'
I tell her, 'that mind not majesty.

'And silent and shy is the Sandman old,
And never, I'm sure, since the world began,
Has any one seen the sands of gold,
Or spoken a word to the kind old man;
But perhaps, when the twilight's gold turns gray,
You may see the old Sandman pass this way.

'For your Majesty's eyes are young and bright,
Tho' mine with the dust of time are dim—
And possibly queens have a clearer sight
Than subjects who sway to a sovereign's whim.
But I'll watch for him, Sweetheart and Queen,' I say,
'And speak if I see him pass this way.'

But the Sandman came! for the young eyes drooped,
And the small mouth curved in a drowsy smile!
Then down to her Majesty's lips I stooped,
And kissed her, and whispered a prayer the while:
'O Thou that giveth thy loved ones sleep,
This night her Majesty safely keep!'

—N. Y. Independent.

JANE PRUDEN'S THANKSGIVING.

(By Rebecca Harding Davis.)

For twenty years, as each November came, John Warriner had said to his wife, 'Next year I will take you to my own home. You shall see New England. Then you will know what Thanksgiving is!'

But John was the pastor of a little church in High Falls, a poor village in West Virginia; the needs of the people were great, and there never was money enough for this holiday.

Mrs. Warriner was a healthy, hard-working little woman with but one talent; she could extract comfort and fun out of the scantiest material.

For instance, there was that old brown silk gown which John had given her twelve years ago. She took such delight in its color and quality whenever she put it on, and scolded him so for his extravagance in buying it, that he believed it to be a robe of state, and felt that he was a foolish, generous fellow.

Their house was small and bare. But she made so much of the 'snug pantry,' and the 'convenient kitchen pump,' and took such keen delight in the cheap alabaster vases and the mountain views from the windows, that John and the children supposed they were lodged royally.

Mr. Warriner, in order to keep his mind clear for noble thoughts and high argument, had gradually left to his wife the care of the poor whites and sick Negroes of the parish. She cooked for them, nursed them, scolded them, forced them to see the good things in their lives given to them by that 'Heavenly Father' of whom she made so real a presence in the village. Sober, chaste or honest she could not always make them; but she did keep them in a happy, friendly humor. The disagreeable things in her own life she dropped hastily out of sight with a good-humored indifference, which her husband secretly thought was stupidity. There was old Ike, a paralytic of eighty, who had been her slave. It was right enough, John said, for Mary to keep him in the garret, and herself carry every meal to him; but when the old wretch tore his bed-clothes into rags and swore at her, Mr. Warriner insisted that he should go to the alms-house.

'Oh, no!' said Mary, laughing, 'Ike was born queer. He can't help it at eighty. They would not understand him at the alms-house.'

'Whether or not, there he goes.'

'No,' said Mary, gently; 'he was not given to them, he was given to me.'

John looked at her; was it possible she did not understand that slavery was over? or did she mean?—he was silent a while; but he said no more about Ike.

You may be sure that Mary made the most of birthdays and Christmases and Thanksgivings. She made too much of them, John grumbled. 'This life,' he told her, 'was not given to us for comfort and merry-making, but to bring us closer to God.'

'But how can the children or Negroes know their Heavenly Father unless they see how kind he is?' she would argue.

It would have been trying to any other woman to hear every November, after all her work to fill the poor village with comfort and happiness, John's peevish 'Next year you shall see a real Thanksgiving—in my own home, in New England.'

But Mary only laughed. It seemed natural to her that her husband, a dreamy, unpractical man, should look back to the home of his boyhood as an Arcadia. It seemed natural to her, too, that the woman whom he had first loved should still have a certain power over him, true husband and man of God as he was. He had told Mary when he first knew her, that he had been engaged to his cousin, Jane Pruden; but that both her parents and his own had forbidden the marriage because of the close kinship. 'If we live to be old people we can never overcome that obstacle,' he said, with a sickly smile; 'we shall always be blood relations!'

In the twenty years that he had passed in High Falls, he had never again mentioned Jane Pruden. The silence, Mary felt, was significant. Somewhere in the solitary, inner chambers of his life, among vague hopes and memories, a niche was set apart for this sweet ghost of his boyhood. When his daily work was tiresome and commonplace, he turned to it unconsciously.

Jane Pruden, Mary had once heard from John's mother, was a delicate, fair girl, of the finest type of Puritan beauty. She was a Puritan by nature, ascetic, pure and devout. 'A woman,' old Mrs. Warriner had declared, 'who would gladly walk over red-hot ploughshares to her duty.'

'So much more rational to throw cold water over them first,' Mary suggested, with her soft laugh. Her mother-in-law did not answer. This fat Southern girl, whom John had married, was as foreign to her as if she had been born a Fijian. It was Mrs. Warriner, in fact, who had first given to her son a definite idea of his wife's stupidity.

She was dead now. John had no kinsfolk left in the world but his Puritan early love; she occupied the homestead in North Wayne to which his heart turned every Thanksgiving. In the twentieth year, Mary, with many a hard effort, saved enough money to take them to New England. She carried it to her husband early in October.

'Jack, write to your cousin, Miss Pruden,' she said, 'that we are coming to spend Thanksgiving with her.'

John's color changed; his chin quivered as he took the money. Brought up thus suddenly against his dim dreams, they scared him.

'You are very good to me, Mary,' he said. 'You must have worked hard to save so much. And you really wish to see New England?'

'Yes; and your cousin, Miss Pruden,' said Mary, as she went out to the garden. 'We have had a ghost in the house long enough,' she thought, as she filled her basket with grapes. 'Better make flesh and blood of it now;' and she laughed quietly to herself.

She arranged their Thanksgiving for the children, the poor whites, the lazy Negroes. 'No, we will not take the boys,' she said to John. 'We will not let loose a hoard of guerillas on Miss Pruden. You and I are enough to go, self-invited.'

'All the family gather in the New England homesteads on Thanksgiving,' said Mr. Warriner. 'And Jane,' a faint heat rising to his cheeks, 'will be glad to take my children to her bosom—to her heart of hearts.'

'The boys' shoes are generally muddy,' said Mrs. Warriner, irrelevantly, with her soft drawl.

They went together, alone. On the way, Mary began to doubt the wisdom of her experiment. What if it should end in making John utterly at variance with his present life?

He had never felt at home in Virginia. North Wayne creeds, North Wayne pronunciation, habits and manners, he had always cited as perfection. Now his enthusiasm for his old home blazed up with new vigor. In his twenty years of absence he had learned to hazily confound the little town with all of New England. The throwing of the tea into the harbor, Faneuil Hall, Webster, Longfellow, the endowments of Harvard, the literary fervors of Boston—he credited North Wayne with all of them. His boasts glowed incessantly in a complacent mild dribble of talk as he sat by his wife in the cars.

'New Englanders have molded this Republic. They are the brains of the nation. They are its moral power. When you come to North Wayne you shall see what a noble people can make of life! It was the sons of North Wayne and their fellow New Englanders who fought the Revolution and won the Civil War. They have given to the country all its inventions, all its practical success. All the literature, too, that is worth anything! What did you say, Mary?'

'Nothing, dear,' turning her laughing eyes away. It pleased her to see how loyal a soul he had, and that he was coming back home, eager and tender as a boy to his old mother's breast. He actually, after a day or two, began to stiffen and grow awkward and formal as he had been when he first came to High Falls. He even called her 'Mrs. Warriner,' once or twice unconsciously. His wife seemed an alien to him. She was not a New Englander. You never could make a Priscilla Alden out of that roly-poly woman. She was wholly outside of that high intellectual atmosphere into which he was now returning. His own rapture in it was so great that any defect which he saw in the country or people irritated him unreasonably. He fumed and scolded at the ill-managed railways, the filthy cars, the uncivil conductors; and when Mary, with many other women, was forced to stand for three hours, he loudly assured the crowded passengers that such an outrage would not be tolerated in any other part of the country!'

An anxious gloom settled on his face as he looked out at the deserted farm-houses in Connecticut and the little mill town in Massachusetts. They were, as a rule, groups of square wooden houses set down in clay yards around a factory; not a bush nor a tree in sight.

'They might at least plant a rose beside the door!' he said. 'These people must be foreigners, Mary. The New Englander is full of energy and poetic feeling. Wherever he goes in the South and West, as you have seen, he plants flourishing villages and builds home-like homes.'

An old farmer before them turned on him sharply. 'They've got good sile and warm air in the West an' South. All the young men's dreened out of New England into them. Energy an' poetic feelins'! The women an' the old people is left. Ef you'd had to harry that rocky field yonder for seventy year for a livin', like me, you'd plant no pesterin' roses by the door!'

John smiled civilly. But he whispered to Mary: 'Wait until you see North Wayne! It is the most beautiful village in the world!'

His face grew more anxious, as, just after sunset, the train stopped. 'We will ride up in one of these barges,' he said. 'It is a mile to the village. I do not see—any familiar face—here.' He glanced around the waiting group on the platform, his lip twitching nervously. Heaven knows what eager welcome from his old home he had expected.

Mary looked at the women. No saintly Puritan beauty there! John put her into the huge waggon and sat down beside her, with a defeated face. His breath came quick and fast as he looked at the fields knobbed with gray, mossy rocks, sloping down into a narrow inlet across which a few white sails flitted in the dim twilight.

'I know every foot of this ground,' he whispered. 'There is the old school-house! And there, that is where Father is buried.' He beat with his closed fist on his knee unconsciously, and the tears stood in his eyes. Two sharp-faced school-girls sitting opposite, nudged each other and giggled, and an old woman put on her spectacles to stare at him.

North Wayne was a cluster of low gray houses lying between the pine woods and the inlet. Climbing vines grew over the porches, and the gardens were laid out in beds of zinnias and dahlias. Vines and flowers were now black with frost. The narrow street ran between the rows of dwellings and turning, passed along the beach where two or three old stone piers abutted into the water. But few lights shone in the houses, no smoke rose from the chimneys, and over the cheerless scene hung a cold November fog.

'Miss Pruden?' said John, timidly, to the driver, 'Is she well? I thought perhaps she would meet us?'

'Costs ten cents to ride to the station. Too much for old Jane,' said the man, with a chuckle. 'What might be your name, now?'

'Warriner, my friend. Do you—I was born here—do you remember me?' and John thrust out his hand eagerly.

The man did not take it, but looked at him keenly. 'I guess you be Jonathan Warriner. You an' me was school-fellows. You've been trainin' in some other part of the country. Twenty-five cents, mem. You, Matt, look alive with that trunk!' He turned his back on John, who whispered eagerly:

'It must be Zed Walker; we were in the same class. Many's the time he and I'—

But Mary did not hear the rest. She was watching Matt, a sickly little lad of twelve, stagger under the weight of the trunk. When he set it down on a doorstep, and climbed again into the waggon, panting, she still watched him. These people were all pinched and pallid for want of proper food, but this boy's gray eyes showed a hungry soul within his hungry body.

'That child has no mother. I'll try and give him a good Thanksgiving,' she thought, with her resolute little nod.

Zed Walker stopped the waggon in front of one of the closed gray houses.

'You be to get out here, Jonathan,' he said. 'Jane Pruden said to tell you she had bespoke a room here for you and your wife. You're to be mealers at Dwight's, 'round the corner.'

The miserable boy grappled with their trunk. In the dim light he looked like a black, energetic cricket.

'Help that child, John,' cried Mary. As Matt came back to the waggon she stopped him. 'To-morrow will be Thanksgiving, my dear,' she said. 'They don't keep it at your house, do they? No, I thought not. Come here at noon, and we shall see what we can do.' And with a soft pat on his cheek she went into the house.

Matt stared and whistled. No woman or man in North Wayne had ever patted him on the cheek or smiled and promised him a dinner; yet it never had occurred to him that he was hardly treated. They were all good Christian folk; but they starved themselves to save their pennies. What use did this strange woman want to make of him? He was angry and, suspicious; yet his heart underneath gave a strange, unwonted throb.

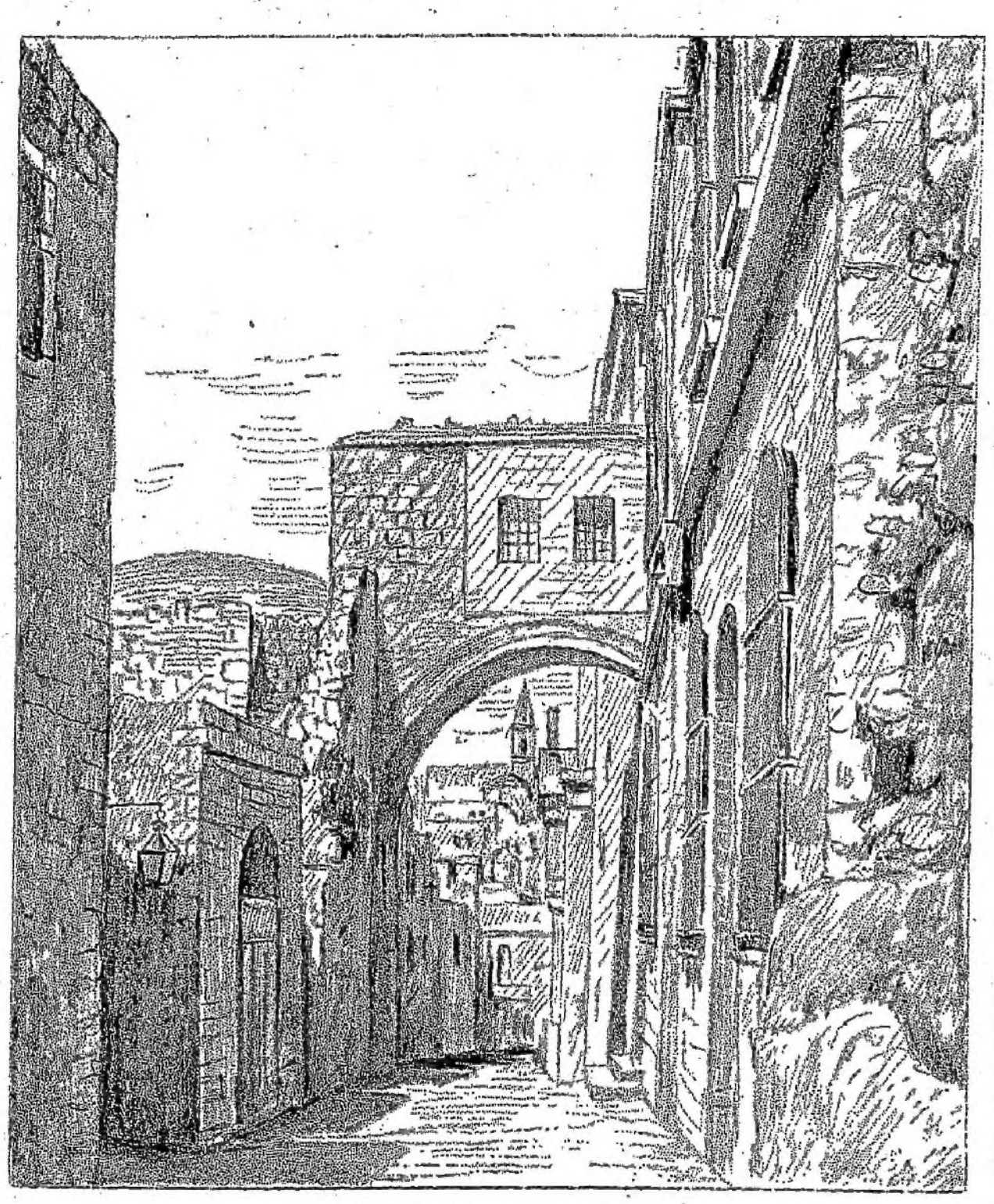
John followed his wife as in a dream. Jane had not come to welcome him! The man really loved his wife heartily. His life with her was broad and warm and full. But in his fancy Jane had reigned a saint, lofty, pure, lifted above all human weaknesses. And the real Jane begrudged ten cents to come to welcome them!

(To be continued.)

No Christian is letting his light shine as Christ intended he should do, who is not doing something to lift somebody up toward heaven.

'BEHOLD THE MAN!'

Jerusalem is truly a city of sorrowful memories. In whatever direction the inquiring traveller turns, he is confronted with some reminder of the long-vanished past, that tells him of dark tragedy, or else of joy that was turned to bitter grief. Not a hill or valley around Zion, not a street or corner of the city itself, is without its gloomy history. These memories seem to come in troops upon the traveller, as he threads the devious windings of the narrow, dingy thoroughfares. Memories of ancient wars and warriors, of conquering Roman and Saracen, of brave Templar and gallant Crusader, of Maccabbean prowess and of Israelitish glory and magnificence. There are memories, too, of cruel kings and a malign priesthood, of armed men-slayers, who went about watering the city pavements with the blood of their victims, and above all rises the face of One who 'suffered as no man suffered,'—Jesus the Innocent. Next to Calvary and Gethsemane, one of the most mournful reminders of the cruelties He endured at the hands of a rabble inflamed by the fiercest of all passions—religious hatred—is the place shown in the illustration. Tradition declares that it was under this arch that the Saviour was scourged by the soldiers and abused and vilified by the mob, who were hounded on by the priests, and that it was on the narrow parapet above the arch that Jesus was led out and shown to the people by Pilate with the memorable words: 'Behold the Man!' (John xix., 5.) It is exceedingly probable that the event the Evangelist describes took place in some such prominent position, where it could be witnessed by the multitude.



THE 'ECCE HOMO ARCH,' JERUSALEM.

Looking at the picture, one can conjure up the scene anew. The scourging had ended and Pilate was about to formally deliver Jesus to a military officer who was authorized to conduct Him to the place of crucifixion. Half-clad, bleeding, with painful, labored steps and sorrowful mien, yet with the divine glory reflected in His face, the Saviour of the world was exposed to the derision and contumely of the dense crowd that packed the narrow street. Pilate was but half-hearted: he lacked the courage to do what his conscience prompted, and save the victim, and he was impelled to give assent to the condemnation of the innocent to appease the people and the priests, and because the Jews had intimidated him by threatening to accuse him to Tiberius. In his heart he felt convinced of the innocence of the accused, and this conviction was deepened by the humane urgings of Procla, his wife, who had been divinely warned in a dream. 'Behold,' he said, as he stood beside the scarred and bleeding Jesus, facing the multitude, 'I have brought Him out to you again, that you may know once more that I have found no fault in Him. Behold the man!'

The Governor, however, was not a match for the crafty priests who had sworn that Jesus should die, and Pilate, giving up the struggle at last, solaced himself with the reflection that, after all, it was the Jews themselves who demanded the sacrifice. He therefore returned to his palace, while the Saviour of the world was led by the Via Dolorosa ('Way of Sorrow'), to the Damascus Gate and death on Calvary.

The 'Ecce Homo Arch' springs from a solidly-built tower on the eastern side of the Government buildings, which form the present fortress and arsenal of Jerusalem. It is generally believed to occupy the site of the 'palace' spoken of by Nehemiah the prophet. So greatly changed is the Jerusalem of to-day from the city of the Saviour's day, that even the lines of the ancient streets have largely disappeared and can be traced only by excavating through deep beds of rubbish. In the general demolition, by the Romans, the prominent buildings were included. It is believed that the arch now known as the Ecce Homo Arch is really of the time of Hadrian, and that the original structure must have been a triple arch, the largest being in the centre. Only this central arch is now standing, and not altogether intact, a portion of it being built into the 'Church of the Sisters of Zion,' on the right. Before reaching this arch, the pilgrim along the Via Dolorosa passes the traditional spots where Simon of Cyrene took up the cross, where Jesus fell under the burden, where Lazarus of Bethany dwelt after being raised from the dead, and where Dives, the typical rich man of the Scripture, dwelt. That which was formerly the site of Pilate's Judgment Hall is now occupied by the official residence of the Pasha of Jerusalem, at the Turkish barracks. It is said to be identical with the old Tower of Antonia, although the building is comparatively modern. The whole city was rebuilt after the Romans demolished it, the old stones being largely used in the construction.

In the season of the pilgrimages, and particularly when the city is crowded by devotees from all parts of the world, gathered for the Easter festival, the Via Dolorosa is visited by multitudes who reverently tread its winding passages from the Judgment Hall to a point opposite the traditional site of Calvary. These pilgrims present a remarkable picture as they pause to view the points which tradition associates with that last earthly journey of Jesus the Innocent.—'Christian Herald.'

MR. POTTER'S THANK-OFFERING.

(By Kate S. Gates, in 'Zion's Herald.')

'What am I going to give to the Lord for a thank-offering on Thanksgiving day?' said Mr. Potter, looking at Mr. Elwell, the new pastor, in amazement. 'Not anything, as I know of. I rather calculate I've earned about all I've got, and I don't see any particular sense in making a thank-offering for it.'

'But,' pleaded Mr. Elwell, 'don't you want to show your gratitude for the many blessings you have that you could not possibly get for yourself, only as they are freely given you by your Heavenly Father?'

'I might, perhaps,' was the reply, 'if I had any; but I've worked hard all my days, and I guess I have earned all I've got. I'll leave the thank-offering for those who have things put in their laps without lifting their fingers. 'I wonder,' thought Mr. Elwell, sadly, as he walked home, 'if I cannot in some way help him to realize how much that makes his life prosperous and happy is God's free gift to him?'

'Thank-offering! Humph! I think I see myself making one,' was Mr. Potter's inward reflection as he sat down by his own fireside in his big easy-chair, with the paper before him. 'There I was, a poor little beggar boy almost, without a cent to my name, and I've worked and scratched and saved until I've gotten enough to be comfortable with, and he wants me to make a thank-offering for it! I'm free to confess I don't see any particular necessity for any such proceeding on my part, and I guess I will omit it until I do.'

And Mr. Potter unfolded his paper in a very self-satisfied way. He was what he called a 'self-made man,' and somehow he had grown to feel almost that he owed nothing to God or man.

Mr. Potter had but one child—a son, Harry—and he was the very apple of his eye. In fact, they were all in all to each other, for the wife and mother had slept in the churchyard for many years. Harry was a bright, lovable boy, and his father's heart was bound up in him. His every thought was for him. He worked hard early and late, he saved and economized, that he might have more for him. He could hardly wait patiently for him to get through his college course and be at home with him.

But to-night, in the middle of the night, the bell rang, and a telegram came—'Harry only just alive.' Only four words, but they turned Mr. Potter's heart to stone. His Harry, for whom he had hoped so much, only just alive—perhaps—no, he could not say that! Why, the thought that he could die had never once entered his mind.

He made his preparations, and started at once. He would get doctors, the very best and all there were in the city. Some of them would save—they must. He would pay them anything willingly if only they would save his boy's life. The fast express seemed to crawl; he longed to get out and run, it seemed to him he could get there so much quicker.

He did reach there at last, however, and then he thought the pain before was nothing to what it was now, seeing that still, white face on the pillow.

'Get doctors, all you can find! Tell them I will pay them anything they ask if they will only do something to help him!' he implored.

But the college president shook his head sadly. 'Everything has been done that can be done,' he said. 'He is beyond human help. We will turn to the Great Physician in his behalf, and it shall be well with the child.'

Then, even in that moment of supreme anguish, Mr. Potter remembered his pastor's words. 'Ah! was not this dearly-beloved son a gift of God? He had said there was nothing for which he need make a thank-offering; now it seemed to *him* if he could only have him well again, it would be his constant thought to discover new ways of showing his gratitude.

He dropped on his knees, sobbing like a child.

'O God, forgive me! I do not deserve him; I do not deserve anything; but if it be Thy will, spare my boy to me!'

It was many long hours before there was any change, then there was a ray of hope, and slowly but surely the tiny ray strengthened until the doctors said: 'He has passed the crisis and will live.'

Then Mr. Potter went away by himself, feeling as he had never felt before in his life—utterly worthless and humbled.

'I do not deserve it. O Lord, I know it! I could do nothing myself, but Thou hast spared him to me, and I thank Thee, from the depths of my heart I thank Thee!'

Thanksgiving day came, bright and clear. Mr. Potter and Harry had reached home the day before, and Mr. Potter appeared at his pastor's door early that morning.

'I couldn't wait any longer. I wanted you to know that my eyes have been opened. I've everything to be thankful for, everything. I see now—why, I couldn't have done a thing only as God gave me everything to do with, and blessed and prospered my efforts. I tried to think of some suitable thank-offering, but nothing seemed good enough until Harry asked me if he might give his restored life to God's service, and I have given my consent to his going as a missionary. It is the happiest and thankfulest Thanksgiving of my life, even if it does sometimes seem as if my poor old heart would break to part with my boy.'

BIG BROTHER.

(By Annie Fellows-Johnston.)

One little tot had fallen and bumped its head, as the train gave a sudden lurch. It was crying pitifully, but in a subdued sort of whimper, as if it felt that crying was of no use when nobody listened and nobody cared. He picked it up, made a clumsy effort to comfort it, and, not knowing what else to do, sat down beside it. Then for the first time he noticed Mrs. Estel.

She had taken a pair of scissors from her travelling-bag, and had cut several newspapers up into soldiers and dolls and all kinds of animals for the crowd that clamored around her.

They were such restless little bodies, imprisoned so long on this tedious journey, that anything with a suggestion of novelty was welcome.

When she had supplied them with a whole regiment of soldiers and enough animals to equip a menagerie, she took another paper and began teaching them to fold it in curious ways to make boxes, and boats, and baskets.

One by one they crowded up closer to her, watching her as if she were some wonderful magician. They leaned their dusty heads against her fresh gray travelling dress. They touched her dainty gloves with dirty, admiring fingers. They did not know that this was the first time that she had ever come in close contact with such lives as theirs.

They did not know that it was the remembrance of another child,—one who awaited her home-coming—a petted little princess born to purple and fine linen, that made her so tender towards them. Remembering what hers had, and all these lacked, she felt that she must crowd all the brightness possible into the short afternoon they were together.

Everyone of them, at some time in their poor, bare lives, had known what it was to be kindly spoken to by elegant ladies, to be patronizingly smiled upon, to be graciously presented with girts.

But this was different. This one took the little Hodge girl right up in her lap while she was telling them stories. This one did not pick out the pretty ones to talk to, as strangers generally did. It really seemed that the most neglected and unattractive of them received the most of her attention.

From time to time she glanced across at Robin's lovely face, and contrasted it with the others. The older boy attracted her still more. He seemed to be the only thoughtful one among them all. The others remembered no past, looked forward to no future. When they were hungry there was something to eat. When they were tired they could sleep, and all the rest of the time there was somebody to play with. What more could one want?

The child never stirred from his place, but she noticed that he made a constant effort to entertain Robin. He told him stories and invented little games. When the bundle came flying in through the window, he opened it with eager curiosity.

Grace had hurried into the village store as soon as the train had stopped, and had bought the first toy she happened to see. It was a black dancing bear, worked by a tiny crank hidden under the bar on which it stood. Robin's pleasure was unbounded, and his shrieks of delight brought all the children flocking around him.

'More dancin', Big Brother,' he would insist, when the animal paused. 'Robin wants to see more dancin'.'

So patient little 'Big Brother' kept on turning the crank, long after everyone save Robin was tired of the black bear's antics.

Once she saw the restless 'Enery trying to entice him into a game of tag in the aisle. Big Brother shook his head, and the fat little legs clambered up on the seat again. Robin watched Mrs. Estel with such longing eyes as she entertained the others, that she beckoned to him several times to join them, but he only bobbed his curls gravely and leaned farther back in his seat.

Presently the man strolled down the aisle again, to close a window, out of which one fidgety boy kept leaning to spit at the flying telegraph poles. On his way back, Mrs. Estel stopped him.

'Will you please tell me about those two children?' she asked, glancing towards Robin and his brother. 'I am very much interested in them, and would gladly do something for them, if I could.'

'Certainly, madam,' he replied deferentially. He felt a personal sense of gratitude towards her for having kept three of his most unruly charges quiet so long. He felt, too, that she did not ask merely from idle curiosity, as so many strangers had done.

'Yes, everybody asks about them, for they are uncommon bright-looking, but it's very little anybody knows to tell.'

Then he gave her their history in a few short sentences. Their father had been killed in a railroad accident early in the spring. Their mother had not survived the terrible shock more than a week. No trace could be found of any relatives, and there was no property left to support them. Several good homes had been offered to the children singly in different towns, but no one was willing to take both. They clung together in such an agony of grief, when an attempt was made at separation, that no one had the heart to part them.

Then someone connected with the management of the Aid Society opened a correspondence with an old farmer of his acquaintance out West. It ended in his offering to take them both for a while. His married daughter, who had no children of her own, was so charmed with Robin's picture, that she wanted to adopt him. She could not be ready to take him, though, before they moved into their new house, which they were building several miles away. The old farmer wanted the older boy to help him with his market-gardening, and was willing to keep the little one until his daughter was ready to take him. So they could be together for a while, and virtually, they would always remain in the same family.

Mr. Dearborn was known to be such an upright, reliable man, so generous and kind-hearted in all his dealings, that it was decided to accept his offer.

'Do they go much farther?' asked the interested listener, when he had told her all he knew of the desolate little pilgrims.

'Only a few miles the other side of Kenton,' he answered.

'Why, Kenton is where I live,' she exclaimed. 'I am glad it will be so near.' Then as he passed on, she thought to herself, 'It would be cruel to separate them. I never saw such devotion as that of the older boy.' His feet could not reach the floor, but he sat up uncomfortably on the high seat, holding Robin in his lap. The curly head rested heavily on his shoulder, and his arms ached with their burden, but he never moved, except to brush away the flies, or fan the flushed face of the little sleeper with his hat.

Something in the tired face, the large appealing eyes, and the droop of the sensitive mouth, touched her deeply. She crossed the aisle and sat down by him.

'Here, lay him on the seat,' she said, bending forward to arrange her shawl for a pillow.

He shook his head. 'Robin likes best for me to hold him.'

'But he will be cooler and so much more comfortable,' she urged. Taking the child from his unwilling arms, she stretched him full length on the improvised bed.

Involuntarily the boy drew a deep sigh of relief, and leaned back in the corner.

'Are you very tired?' she asked. 'I have not seen you playing with the other children.'

'Yes'm,' he answered. 'We've come such a long way. I have to amuse Robin all the time he's awake, or he'll cry to go back home.'

'Where was your home?' she asked kindly. 'Tell me about it.'

He glanced up at her, and with a child's quick instinct, knew that he had found a friend. The tears that he had been bravely holding back all the afternoon for Robin's sake, could no longer be restrained. He sat for a minute trying to wink them away. Then he laid his head wearily down on the window-sill and gave way to his grief with great choking sobs.

She put her arm around him and drew his head down on her shoulder. At first the caressing touch of her fingers, as they gently touched his hair, made the tears flow faster. Then he grew quieter after a while, and only sobbed at long intervals as he answered her questions.

His name was Steven, he said. He knew nothing of the home to which he was being taken, nor did he care, if he could only be allowed to stay with Robin. He told her of the little white cottage in New Jersey, where they had lived, of the peach-trees that bloomed around the house, of the beehive in the garden.

He had brooded over the recollection of his lost home so long in silence, that now it somehow comforted him to talk about it to this sympathetic listener.

Soothed by her soft hand smoothing his hair, and exhausted by the heat and his violent grief, he fell asleep at last. It was almost dark when he awoke and sat up.

'I must leave you at the next staton,' Mrs. Estel said, 'but you are going only a few miles farther. Maybe I shall see

you again some day.' She left him to fasten her shawl-strap, but presently came back, bringing a beautifully illustrated story-book that she had bought for the little daughter at home.

'Here, Steven,' she said, handing it to him. 'I have written my name and address on the fly-leaf. If you ever need a friend, dear, or are in trouble of any kind, let me know and I will help you.'

He had known her only a few hours, yet, when she kissed him good-bye, and the train went whirling on again, he felt that he had left his last friend behind him.

When one is a child, a month is a long time. Grandfathers say, 'That happened over seventy years ago, but it seems just like yesterday.' Grandchildren say, 'Why, it was only yesterday we did that, but so much has happened since that it seems such a great while!'

One summer day can stretch out like a lifetime at life's beginning. It is only at threescore and ten that we liken it to a weaver's shuttle.

It was in July when old John Dearborn drove to the station to meet the children. Now the white August lilies were standing up sweet and tall by the garden fence.

'Seems like we've been here 'most always,' said Steven, as they rustled around in the hay hunting eggs. His face had lost its expression of sadness, so pathetic in a child, as day after day Robin's little feet pattered through the old homestead, and no one came to take him away.

Active outdoor life had put color in his face and energy into his movements.

Mr. Dearborn and his wife were not exacting in their demands, although they found plenty for him to do. The work was all new and pleasant, and Robin was with him everywhere. When he fed the turkeys, when he picked up chips, when he drove the cows to pasture, or gathered the vegetables for market, Robin followed him everywhere, like a happy, dancing shadow.

Then when the work was done, there were the kittens in the barn and the swing in the apple-tree. A pond in the pasture sailed their shingle boats. A pile of sand, left from building the new ice-house, furnished material for innumerable forts and castles. There was a sunny field and a green, leafy orchard. How could they help but be happy? It was summer time and they were together.

Steven's was more than a brotherly devotion. It was with almost the tenderness of mother-love that he watched the shining curls dancing down the walk as Robin chased the toads through the garden, or played hide-and-seek with the butterflies.

'No, the little fellow's scarcely a mite of trouble,' Mrs. Dearborn would say to the neighbors sometimes when they inquired. 'Steven is real handy about dressing him and taking care of him, so I just leave it mostly to him.'

Mrs. Dearborn was not a very observing woman, or she would have seen why he 'was scarcely a mite of trouble.' If there was never a crumb left on the doorstep where Robin sat to eat his lunch, it was because Big Brother's careful fingers had picked up everyone. If she never found any tracks of little bare feet on the freshly scrubbed kitchen floor, it was because his watchful eyes had spied them first, and he had wiped away every trace.

He had an instinctive feeling that if he would keep Robin with him, he must not let anyone feel that he was a care or annoyance. So he never relaxed his watchfulness in the daytime, and slept with one arm thrown across him at night.

Sometimes, after supper, when it was too late to go outdoors again, the restless little feet kicked thoughtlessly

against the furniture, or the meddlesome fingers made Mrs. Dearborn look at him warningly over her spectacles and shake her head.

Sometimes the shrill little voice, with its unceasing questions, seemed to annoy the old farmer as he dozed over his weekly newspaper beside the lamp. Then, if it was too early to go to bed, Steven would coax him over in a corner to look at the book that Mrs. Estel had given him, explaining each picture in a low voice that could not disturb the deaf old couple.

It was at these times that the old feeling of loneliness came back so overwhelmingly. Grandpa and Grandma, as they called them, were kind in their way, but even to their own children they had been undemonstrative and cold. Often in the evenings they seemed to draw so entirely within themselves, she with her knitting, and he with his paper or accounts, that Steven felt shut out, and apart. 'Just the strangers within thy gates,' he sometimes thought to himself. He had heard that expression a long time ago, and it often came back to him. Then he would put his arm around Robin and hug him up close, feeling that the world was so big and lonesome, and that he had no one else to care for but him.

(To be continued.)

'DIE—WHICH I WON'T!'

A MEMORY.

(By Margaret Sutton Briscoe.)

'But am I going to die, mother?'

'Why do you ask, my darling? Do you feel as if you were?'

'I don't know, mother. I never died before. Father, you tell me.'

'Nonsense!' said the physician. 'Of course you are not dying. Here, take your medicine like a good child, and get well.'

Jere turned away fretfully. 'No, I am not going to take any more. I am going to die.'

'Take your medicine at once, my child,' said a steady voice; and the boy, opening his lips mechanically, obeyed. Mr. Barton followed the physician into the adjoining room.

'Is there a chance?' he asked.

The doctor was looking grave and annoyed. 'There was,' he replied. 'Who has been talking in the room? How has this idea taken hold of him?'

'No one has suggested it. Jere was always a precocious child, you know.'

'Yes; but if we are going to have this restlessness and fear to fight as well, why, then—'

'There is no hope?'

'None. You may find means to soothe him. If not—well, do what you can. I shall return shortly, for my part.'

Jere looked down at his father's hands, as they lay on the pillow near him. They were not so white, or so soft, or so small as his mother's, and the nails were not so pretty and pink; but he liked to feel them lift him about in the bed, and they refreshed him when they lay on his forehead. He moved now so that his cheek touched the back of one of them.

'There's father hands and mother hands, isn't there?' he said. 'Father, you'll tell me the truth. Am I going to die?'

Mr. Barton sat down on the side of the bed, and gathered his boy into his arm, lifting the hot restless head upon his shoulder.

'Jere, you like to hear father's stories, don't you? I am going to tell you one.'

'I used to like them when I wasn't dying. I don't know now.'

'A story of when I was a boy.'

Jere nestled his forehead against his father's throat. 'Lift up your head the littlest bit, father. I like the feel of your beard.'

Mrs. Barton rose quickly, and walked over to the window, looking out at a landscape which she did not see.

'When I was a boy—' began Mr. Barton.

'Yes, that's the kind of story that's best. Begin at the very beginning, father.'

'When I was a boy, there was a great war going on. I am not going to tell you about that, though. My story is of one of its soldiers, and I don't think he knew much more of the rights and wrongs of it than you would.'

'You didn't fight, father?'

'No; I was very little older than you are. But one of the fiercest of the battle-fields was near our old homestead, and after the fight was over, your grandfather, with all the men left on the farm, went out to help the wounded. The old country doctor went along too.

'It was a dark night. They had to go out with lanterns, and so I slipped through the door behind them, keeping in the shadow. The first soldier they ran across was lying on his face. One of the men turned him over, and somebody held a lantern while the doctor examined him.

'"Dead!" said the doctor, with a nod.

'Then they all went on, I creeping after them softly. On my way I had to pass quite close by the dead soldier, and suddenly I nearly jumped out of my boots, for I thought I heard a moan. I was so frightened that my heart stood as still as I did. I walked over to the soldier's side, my heart going thump, thump, thump! When I got to him, there was no doubt about it. I heard another moan. And this time I was too scared to run, but I yelled, "Father!" as loud as I could.'

'Yes, that's just what I would have done,' said Jere; and his father drew him closer as he went on.

'My father and the doctor came running back. They were frightened too, for they knew my voice.

'"What's all this?" said the doctor, and then I told him that the man he had said was dead was not dead at all, that I had heard him moaning. The men came up with their lanterns, and the doctor made another examination. The soldier's leg was broken, and there was a big hole in his chest.

'"He's as good as dead," said the doctor. "Here, Tom Barton, you scamper home. There are plenty of men on the field to save, and there's no time to lose.'

But I cried and begged father not to desert my soldier. At last he told me that he would leave one of the men with me, and I might stay by the soldier until he died.

'"He's dead now, I believe," said the doctor, flashing his lantern on the man's face.

'And as he spoke, the man opened his eyes, and said quite distinctly, through his set teeth, "Die—which I won't!"

'The doctor burst out laughing, knelt down again, opened the man's shirt, and staunched the blood oozing from the hole in his chest. The soldier's eyes had closed, and he was breathing painfully, with long rests between.'

'I sat down on the ground and took the soldier's head on my knee, every now and then wetting his lips as the doctor had showed me, and dripping some of the stuff between them.'

The nurse came forward with the medicine, but Jere turned from her impatiently.

'You wet my lips with it, father, and drip it in, like you did the man.'

Mr. Barton took the cup, moistening the child's lips with the contents, and pouring the rest slowly down his throat.

'That was just the way, father?'

'Yes, that was just the way.'

'Then go on.'

'When my father came back and found the soldier still breathing, he told me that the house was too full to take him in, but that I might have him carried to my old mammy's cabin if I chose and that mammy and I might see what we could do.

'Early in the morning I dressed myself, and went down to my father's study, where I got a big sheet of white paper, and printed on it, in great straggling letters (I could not print so well as you do, although I was older), 'Die—which I won't!'

'As soon as my breakfast was over, I went down to mammy's cabin with the sheet in my hand, and pinned it securely on the footboard of my soldier's bedstead with two of my mother's big bonnet pins. When I turned around the soldier's eyes were open, and he lay staring at me.

'I thought he was too ill to understand, for mammy said he was; but when the doctor came in and bent over him, my soldier was too weak to lift his hand, but with the slowest movement you ever saw he raised his finger and pointed to 'Die—which I won't!'

'The doctor looked down at the footboard and spelled the words out. Then he looked at me. "Well, you are a pair of you," he said. And he burst out laughing again. I used to think the doctor the most heartless being that ever lived in those days. Now I understand him, and I know how much better it is to laugh than to cry.'

'Even when people are dying?'

'Yes; even when people are dying, if the laugh is the right kind.'

'"You ought to be dead by rights," said the doctor; "but as you are not—"

'Wait a minute, father. Don't go on yet. I'd like one.'

'One what, my boy?'

'A "Die—which I won't!'

The figure at the window moved suddenly.

'What do you mean, my child?' asked Mr. Barton.

MRS. BARTON ROSE QUICKLY AND WALKED OVER TO THE WINDOW.

'I'd like one pinned on the foot of my bed like the man had.'

There was some silence for a moment, and when Mr. Barton spoke his voice was unsteady. 'Perhaps mother will make one for you. Were you listening, dear?'

Mrs. Barton came forward. There were deep circles about her eyes, and her lips, as they set in a smile, were quivering. 'Yes, I will make it,' she said; and she went into the next room.

When she came back she had a sheet of white paper in her hand. And on it, in great black letters, were the words, 'Die—which I won't.'

Jere looked at it contentedly. 'That's right, isn't it, father? Now pin it up for me just where he had it. Tell them where father.'

'Just at the foot of the bed—a little to the right.'

The nurse pinned up the paper, and Jere read it, slowly, 'Die—which I won't!'

Mrs. Barton, with a catch in her breath and a quick movement, bent forward. Her husband stretched out his arm, and drew her to him, whispering in her ear.

'Go on,' said Jere. 'Mother, you mustn't interrupt.'

Mrs. Barton went back to the window, and the story went on.

'My mother was very good to me. She used to excuse me from my lessons, and I spent long hours sitting by my soldier's bedside. "You may learn your lesson there to-day," she would say; but as she never gave me any book to take with me, I used to wonder what she meant. Now I understand that too. I had a kind of storehouse in my mind, where I kept things I didn't understand, and wondered over them.'

'You understand everything now, father, don't you?'

Mr. Barton looked down at the flushed face and listened to the quick breaths.

'No, not everything; there are some things which I shall never understand. I keep making additions to my storehouse.'

Jere's eyes were fastened on the paper at the foot of the bed; then on his own hand. He was curling up the small fingers, save one which pointed to the footboard.

Mr. Barton's voice went on steadily. 'At first I was sent from the room whenever the wounds were dressed, but after a little the doctor let me come in and hold things for him. Once when I was standing by the bedside, I saw my soldier's hand groping on the counterpane, and I put mine into it. After that I let mammy hold the things, while I held my soldier's hand instead. He would turn and look for it if I was not quite ready. Every morning when I came in, I would point to the paper, and the soldier's finger would point also.'

'Like mine does? See, father!'

'Yes, just that way. It was a long time before he could speak, and longer before he could move—hand or foot.'

'"All depends upon being very careful," the doctor said. He used to give me his instructions, and I watched my soldier to see that he did nothing which he was told not to do. I was very strict with him.

'"I believe the man is actually going to get well," said the doctor at last.

'And he did. But it was very slow. At first he was only allowed to sit up in bed for five minutes at a time. I used to hold the watch. Then he got from the bed to a chair. After that there was no keeping him in the cabin. He would walk out with a stick in one hand, and the other hand resting on my shoulder. I suppose there was no prouder boy in the county than I when I walked my soldier as far as the house, and showed him to my father and mother.'

'All well, father?'

'Yes, well and strong.'

Jere's eyes turned again to the foot of the bed. 'What did he do with his paper?'

'What are you going to do with yours?'

'I would like to do whatever he did.'

'The first day my soldier went out of that cabin door we unpinned it, and he folded it up carefully, and put it in an inside pocket. He was going to take it to Lucy, he said.'

'Who is L—Lucy?'

Mr. Barton looked down, his face changing suddenly. 'Lucy is his wife now,' he said, slowly. 'She was only his sweetheart then. She was waiting for him far away in the mountains. He told me all about her. She had no father or mother, and her aunt was not very good to her. My soldier was the only thing Lucy had on earth. He had promised that he would come back.'

The nurse advanced again with the medicine in her hand. Mr. Barton motioned her away. His voice went on monotonously. What he was saying he did not himself know.

Jere's head lay heavily on his shoulder, his eyelashes rising and drooping slowly. Once his eyes fastened on the paper, and his lips moved.

Mrs. Barton, standing behind her husband with clasped hands, bent forward breathlessly.

'Die—which I won't!' murmured the childish voice, and the eyelids closed. The breath came softly and regularly through the parted lips.

Mr. Barton's voice faltered and broke. His supporting arms and body remained motionless, but he raised his head until his eyes met those of his wife, and the overflowing thankfulness in them answered the question in hers.

Mrs. Barton covered her face with her hands, and the nurse, stepping forward, drew her gently away, her own eyes brimming over with tears.

'It is natural sleep,' she whispered. 'The crisis will pass.'

HESBA STRETTON AT HOME.

(Continued from first page.)

good sister opened the letter and read, and read again, the encouraging words of that best and kindest of editors, Charles Dickens. From that time forth Charles Dickens hardly ever issued a Christmas number of 'All the Year Round,' which had not a contribution from the pen of Miss Hesba Stretton.

Thus time went on; Mr. Smith died, and his daughters were left alone. One of them married; but Elizabeth and 'Hesba' stayed together; the former bravely going into the world as a daily governess, and returning after each day's work to the lodgings in Manchester where the other was plying her magic pen, and weaving story after story. Of course, you all know that infinitely tender and touching story, 'Jessica's First Prayer.' Well, 'Jessica's First Prayer' went into the world from those lodgings in Manchester. That it would be a success, everybody expected, because by then anything Miss Stretton might write was sure to be a success. But it was more than that; it was a triumph, and it made the author famous all over the world, and was translated into I do not know how many foreign and very uncanny-looking languages, such as Arabic, Mahratte, Bulgarian, Singhalese, Malagassy, etc., etc.

And still the fertile pen went on and on, and on. I asked Miss Hesba Stretton, the other day, how many books she had written altogether. She shook her head, with her gentle, quiet smile, saying, 'I really could not tell you.' Nor could her sister, but you know there are a good many, don't you? Short stories and long, some cheery and bright, others sad and pathetic, but all what we in these restless days call 'readable,' and there breathes the spirit of radiant and steadfast faith and hope and charity, which form the basis of the writer's character. To give you an instance of the popularity of Miss Stretton's books, I think I may tell you, without a breach of confidence, that one of her short stories, which is sold at a shilling, and in which her share in the profits amounted to a penny on each copy sold, has yielded no less than £400 to her.

Miss Stretton is a very careful, but a rapid writer. 'Hester Morley' she wrote three times, because she could not get it quite to her liking.

One of the books which has always appeared to me as among the cleverest of Miss Stretton's works is 'The Doctor's Dilemma.' Indeed, it is quite a marvel to me how anyone could write a long story with so intricate and difficult a plot, of which, nevertheless, even the most careless reader need never lose a single thread. Some of the scenes and all the delicate and vivid background of this novel are taken from life. Miss Elizabeth Stretton wishing to add conversational French to her accomplishments as teacher, the two sisters went to a school in Normandy where they meant to board. And there they themselves went through the miserable experiences of the heroine of 'The Doctor's Dilemma.'

It is not surprising, indeed it seems only a very natural thing, that the American Tract Society sent its gold medal, which is now and then awarded to the writer of the best book or pamphlet with a religious basis, to Miss Stretton. It is a beautiful large medal, inscribed on one side, 'Awarded to Hesba Stretton, for volume "A Night and a Day," by the American Tract Society, 1876,' and on the other, 'The George Wood Medal. For premium Tract on the Glory of Christ.'

'How do you work, Miss Stretton?' I asked, in the dusk of that lovely, peaceful April evening, as we went down the splendid avenue of old elms leading to Ham House. 'Have you a special method according to which you work out all your ideas?' 'No,' she replied, 'I cannot say that I have. An idea occurs to me that seems to be suitable, and it becomes the peg on which to hang a story. I do not work out the "plot" of a story before I begin it, and it often happens that the people in a story do things which I should never have thought they would do at the outset.'

'And have you a favorite among your own books?'

'Yes, as a piece of literary work I like 'Michel Lorio's Cross' best. The idea suggested itself to me one evening when my sister and I were staying at St. Michael's Mount, in Normandy. We had been into the interesting old church, hewn partly into a rock, and as we were coming out we heard loud groans in one of the cottages close by. We went in, and found an old woman in bed, and talked to her for a while. And this incident suggested the story.'

Miss Hesba Stretton and her sister Elizabeth have always lived together. I am told that it is always a risk for two sisters to do this,—why it should be so any more than if sister and brother, or mother and children live together, I cannot, for the life of me, imagine,—but in the present case it has been an entire success. It is charming, refreshing, to see these two sisters together, both women of strong individuality, both very different from each other, and yet both so closely united. I suppose the secret of their union lies in the fact that the one is the complement of the other, and that neither has attempted that hopeless task in which so often you see members of one family wear out their own and embitter each other's lives, namely, to convert those with whom they live to their own views in everything.

For a good many years after they left the North, they lived on the borders of Epping Forest, where, I believe, the nightingales gave such concerts at midnight in May, that they became a veritable annoyance; and the sisters, bereft of their night's rest, had to fly the place eventually. Curiously enough, the Stretton family is entirely devoid of an ear for music. The literary and artistic vein runs very strongly through the family, and comes out in generation after generation, but they honestly confess that, except on rare occasions, music is not a joy to them.

For several years, recently, the sisters have travelled about on the Continent, mostly in Switzerland and Italy, and I fancy there are few interesting places in these two countries with which the Miss Strettons are not familiar. But no preoccupation with her literary work, no foreign tours, have been able to interfere with Miss Stretton's good and steadfast work in the cause of those who 'labor and are heavy laden.' It was she who started in London the noble work which is now being done by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; she who worked hard in order that the poor starvelings in the interior of Russia might be saved from a cruel death, when, two or three years ago, a famine fell upon the agricultural districts, and, instead of the peasant reaper bringing in the harvest of grain, 'the reaper whose name is Death,' swept over the land, and gathered in his cruel harvest of human lives.

They have founded a branch of the Popular Book Club at Ham, with the object of circulating, among the working classes, good books, and of awakening new interests in the minds of those whose lives are otherwise not over bright. The library at Ham is only a few months old, but 1,200 volumes have been taken out (at the rate of ½d. a week, for the originators wisely consider that the loan of a good book is worth the sacrifice of that sum), and the villagers begin to appreciate this 'new venture' very keenly.

Pray do not think that in telling you the foregoing I have done more than given you a very fragmentary sketch of what seems to me a singularly useful life. My pen has felt clumsy, all through. But when, in future, you read Miss Stretton's books, I hope you will read them with the greater interest and admiration since you know that the writer's life is as good as her stories, and that she practises what she preaches.—Hulda Friederichs, in the 'Young Woman.'

A REWARD OF PERSISTENCY.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

(By Clement Adelbert.)

They worked together in the same store. For convenience, we will call them Arthur Duniway and George Vickers. Arthur was a young fellow of some nineteen summers; his companion, a man of thirty, or thereabouts. George had a wife and two children; Arthur was the youngest of three sons. But nevertheless they were congenial.

They were much together, and George would receive more advice from his young friend than from many men much older. George's one fault was drinking. Every Saturday, regularly, as he received his salary, he would spend a part on liquor, and remain drunk over Sunday, coming around again all right Monday.

Arthur, however, determined to put a stop to these weekly excesses, and deliberately set about doing it one Saturday, not long after he had formed the determination.

They received their salary together, as usual, and, while Arthur was putting on his coat, George slipped out and was gone. Arthur hurried after him. He knew he doubtless would be in a certain saloon across the street, and, total abstainer as he was, he rushed in. There was George.

'Oh, I say, come on!' said Arthur.

And, coaxing and wheedling, he got George, who had had only a couple of glasses, to follow him out.

'Now, I want you to go home,' said Arthur, when they had gained the street.

'What for?' growled George.

'Because I want you to keep sober over to-morrow; and you know you won't do it if you don't go home.'

'Well, let me have one more drink, and I will,' replied the older man.

'Will you take what I do, if I go in with you?' asked Arthur.

He assented, and they went into the next saloon, where Arthur called for ginger ale for two. George was not entirely satisfied, but, as Arthur paid the bill, he drank his mild substitute, and came away without a word. Once more in the street, the old passion seized him.

'I will have some liquor!' he cried, wrenching his arm from his companion's.

'Very well,' said Arthur, calmly. 'But wait just a moment. Do you see Striver over there?'

George looked, and beheld one of his customary companions lying senseless on the edge of the road. It was a dark, cold night, and the rain began to drip steadily down. The thin clothing of the poor wretch in the road clung to him, water-soaked.

'Now, Striver's awful drunk, and I've got to get him home,' continued Arthur, in a confidential tone. 'I can't do it alone, though, and so you'll have to help me.'

George was willing, and together they lifted the prostrate man, together they got him home. He chanced to live next door to George, and Vickers, partially sobered by his exertions, was induced to go in and lie down. Arthur stayed near the house for an hour or more. The rain came relentlessly down, like remorse upon a contrite soul. Still Arthur stayed and waited, until all fear that George might get out again was passed; and then he walked away.

Monday morning came, and with it George to the store. The sun was warm and bright, and the whole earth seemed tenfold more glorious for its late tears. Upon seeing Arthur, George rushed up to him with outstretched hand.

'God bless you, my boy!' he said. 'I had a grand good Sabbath yesterday, with my wife and the little folks. 'Pon my honor, sir, I thank you! I haven't been sober a Sunday in many a day before.'

And he turned hastily away, with a half-choke in his voice.

Arthur breathed a little prayer of thanks, and went cheerily on with his work.—'S.-S. Times.'

The religion taught by Zoroaster may be summed up in the motto, 'Good thoughts, good words, good deeds.'

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THE NORTHERN MESSENGER is printed and published every fortnight at the 'Witness' Building, at the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets, in the city of Montreal, by John Redpath Dougall, of Montreal.

All business communications should be addressed 'John Dougall & Son,' and all letters to the Editor should be addressed Editor of the "Northern Messenger."